of measures for further facilitating mutually beneficial contacts between their businesspersons. These include encouraging more regular business exchanges, participation in each other's trade exhibitions, diversification of areas of trade and investment and reinvigorating the Joint Business Council. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has reopened its office in Moscow. CII and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) are being encouraged to develop institutional arrangements for trade promotion and information-sharing with their Russian counterparts.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

Discouraging Muttah Marriage

1025. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have written to all embassies in the country to discourage Muttah Marriage on payment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and number of such cases which came to Government's notice;

(c) whether such practice is violative of the Immoral Traffic Act; and

(d) the measures Government propose to take to nip this evil in the bud?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (d) Indian Diplomatic Missions in the Gulf countries had been instructed to discretely monitor those seeking visas to ascertain the genuineness of the intended purpose of the visit. Recently they have been once again instructed to keep a close watch on this issue. The Embassies of the Gulf countries in India have also been appraised of the problems during regular interactions. Relevant laws that are violated by Muttah Marriage practice are being ascertained so that the concerned authorities could take appropriate action. It would be useful to encourage NGOs working in this field to play a parallel proactive role to discourage/eliminate this evil.